

# Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers

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Volume 24 | Issue 3

Article 5

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7-1-2007

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### Recommended Citation

Rogers, Katherin A. (2007) "God is Not the Author of Sin: An Anselmian Resopnse to McCann," *Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers*: Vol. 24 : Iss. 3 , Article 5.

Available at: <https://place.asburyseminary.edu/faithandphilosophy/vol24/iss3/5>

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# GOD IS NOT THE AUTHOR OF SIN: AN ANSELMIAN RESPONSE TO MCCANN

Katherin A. Rogers

Following Anselm of Canterbury I argue against Hugh McCann's claim that a traditional, classical theist understanding of God's relationship to creation entails that God is the cause of our choices, including our choice to sin. I explain Anselm's thesis that God causes all that has ontological status, yet does not cause sin. Then I show that McCann's God, if not a sinner, must nonetheless be an unloving deceiver, McCann's theodicy fails on its own terms, his proposed requirements for moral authenticity are insufficient, and his suggestion that his universe is "safer" than Anselm's is misguided.

Hugh McCann asks a pressing question in the title to a recent article, "[Is God] The Author of Sin?" His answer is, yes! He argues that on a traditional understanding of divine sovereignty we must suppose that God's creative activity causes our existence complete with our choices. He writes that, "God [is] the author of sin in one sense: namely, that he is the First Cause, as tradition would say, of those acts of will in which we sin. All of our willings owe their existence immediately to God, just as we do, and could never take place but for his active participation, in the form of willing that they occur."<sup>1</sup> His proof is that we cannot make sense of the idea that, though God is the cause of everything with ontological status, we ourselves *and not God* cause the existence of our choices. (His thesis is that both we ourselves and God cause our sin, but in different orders of being.) He goes on to argue that, though God is the author of sin, He is not sinful Himself. McCann grants that his position conflicts with the traditional free will defense, since he explicitly denies the claim that all the wickedness and consequential suffering originates ultimately with creatures and not with God. But he proposes an alternative suggestion for why a good God would allow, and in fact produce, all the wickedness and suffering of the actual world. He concludes by arguing that his view does not undermine our claim to authenticity as moral agents.

In this paper I argue first, following Anselm of Canterbury, that it is possible to analyze choice in a way which allows that all that has being comes from God without that making Him the author of sin. I go on to show that, although on McCann's understanding of "sin" he may succeed in showing that his God is not a "sinner," he needs to address the further charges that his God is an unloving deceiver. I argue that his proposed theodicy fails even on its own terms and that moral authenticity requires more than his analysis allows. I conclude with some thoughts on our desire for "safety."



*Anselm on Created Agency*

McCann, quite rightly in my view, subscribes to what might be called a traditional understanding of classical theism which sees God as the absolute, immediately sustaining source of all that is not Himself. Many contemporary philosophers of religion seem to assume a much more diminutive divinity. For example, some seem to suppose a god who set things in motion "in the beginning," and who knows what's going on and perhaps interferes with the universe periodically, but does not keep everything in being from moment to moment. Others (Molinists for instance) propose something like Plato's demiurge who is confronted by a set of independently existing propositions which function as a framework constraining his creation. But if one insists upon the traditional concept of divine omnipotence and sovereignty, one faces a difficult task in carving out a place for created agency. McCann, following Augustine and Aquinas, settles for what I term "secondary" agency, on the model of secondary causation in general. In speaking of natural causes, it is correct to say that some natural event, the burning of the fire for example, is a real cause of some natural effect, like the reducing the cotton to ash, though the entire system, all the objects and properties and events, are immediately willed and caused by God (the distinction between willing and causing is *quoad nos* since willing and causing are one to God). God is the primary cause and the fire is the secondary cause. So with human agency, according to McCann. It is correct to say that you cause your choice, but you, and everything about you, all your properties and actions, are immediately caused by God. The problem, of course, is that then God is the author of sin.

McCann's basic defense of the position that a creature can have only secondary agency is that, given traditional, classical theism it makes no sense to suppose that the creature can cause the actual existence of anything at all. Further, McCann argues that positing that the created agent causes a choice must lead to a vicious regress. In order to bring the choice into being, it would have to engage in a previously chosen activity, which choice would have to be preceded by yet another, etc.<sup>2</sup> One way to attack this latter claim might be to note that McCann himself posits at least one agent, God, who brings choices into being presumably without any vicious regress, and so such a thing is not impossible *simpliciter*. And if it is possible for some agent to create a choice, and God is omnipotent, ought He not to be able to create an agent who can create a choice? Perhaps not. God cannot create all possible beings. For example, it is possible for some being, God, to exist as uncreated, but He obviously cannot create an uncreated being. So maybe it is just not possible for God to impart his sort of truly independent, creative agency to creatures.

But maybe it is possible for Him to impart a dim reflection of divine aseity. I propose to argue that created agents can indeed choose from themselves, such that their choices are not produced by God, *even though God is the source of all that has being*. The proposal here is based on the work of Anselm of Canterbury in his efforts to deal with issues very similar to those raised by McCann. Anselm's analysis is extremely complex and sophisticated, and I will not begin to do it justice here.<sup>3</sup> I think I can say

enough, though, to cast doubt on McCann's claim that primary, created agency is just impossible. Anselm's thesis is this: absolutely everything that is not God is from God. That means that all the existents involved in a human choice are immediately, causally sustained by God. Anselm sees these existents as the faculty of the will itself, and the desires which result in a choice. In the case of rational agents, God creates in us two sorts of desires. There is the desire for "benefit," that is, whatever we believe will make us happy. All things with wills, including lower animals, desire benefits, and no one is motivated except by a desire for benefit. However, God creates in rational agents a second order desire for what he terms "justice."<sup>4</sup> In desiring justice we desire that our desire for benefit should be properly ordered in accord with the will of God. Sometimes we may find ourselves wanting something that we believe will make us happy, but which we hold to be outside of what we justly ought to desire. In such a situation the desire for justice comes in conflict with the desire for (this particular) benefit. Sin consists in pursuing the benefit contrary to justice. And it is entirely up to the created agent whether he clings to the justice or throws it away by willing the benefit.<sup>5</sup>

Does this mean that there is some *thing*, the choice, which is not made by God? Well, there are things and things. There is an aspect of the event of you choosing sin over justice, or justice over sin, which is entirely up to you. But this aspect, though decisive, is nothing with ontological status. What a choice consists in is simply a desire reaching its conclusion, and the desire is given by God. In the case of conflicting desires Anselm suggests something very similar to the hypothesis of plural parallel processing which Robert Kane proposes in an effort to solve libertarianism's "intelligibility problem."<sup>6</sup> To make the point clear, first suppose an agent has only one, god-given desire and follows it to its conclusion—e.g., God makes you and He creates in you a desire to eat which you follow to the point where you eat. Nothing in this scenario suggests any limitation on divine sovereignty or omnipotence. Absolutely everything is caused by God. But the situation is not so different with conflicting, god-given desires. You are trying to succeed, not at pursuing a single desire, but rather at pursuing two different desires both of which cannot be realized. Whichever desire eventually "wins out," it came from God. Every *thing* in the choice is caused by God. You did not bring anything new into being, any more than if you had had but a single god-given desire to follow.

But if you had had only one desire to follow, you, the created agent, would not have any input in the choice at all. You would, like the lower animal, simply be doing what God made you to do, like the good dog or horse which wills as it ought to will because it cannot choose otherwise. Human beings are more impressive in that they can step back from their immediate desires, and choose that those desires should accord with the will of God. It is this ability which gives the created agent a measure of aseity, a reflection, however minute and dim, of God's independence.<sup>7</sup> Granted, this ability to choose rightly does not confer *much* independence on the creature, nor does it confer any real creative power at all. In a good choice, every *thing* in the choice, and all its properties including its goodness come from God. In a sinful choice, every *thing* comes from God, and

the only property which can be credited to the created agent is the sinfulness, which isn't any sort of a thing at all, being only the absence of the justice that ought to have been there.<sup>8</sup> Still, it is up to the created agent alone whether it will cling to justice or throw it away.

Anselm does not ignore or try to soft-pedal the intellectual discomfort involved in his libertarian analysis of created freedom. The existence of conflicting desires can be attributed to God's causal activity. The "winning out" of one desire over another cannot be explained in terms of anything at all, beyond the bare fact of the agent's success in following the "winning" desire. Robert Kane holds that so long as the agent succeeds in his intended goal he is responsible, even if success at a conflicting goal was equally possible. But still, if the question is, what ultimately explains the preference of one option over another, there is no answer, and Anselm seems less sanguine about this conclusion than Kane. Anselm ends his discussion of this issue, what would today be termed the "intelligibility problem," by saying that a free choice, "[is] its own efficient cause and effect, if such a thing can be said."<sup>9</sup>

Anselm recognizes that his conclusion involves having to accept some unintelligibility when it comes to created agency. And it involves saying that the decisive aspect of the choice, what is really up to the choosing creature, is not any sort of *thing* at all. Perhaps these conclusions are problematic. But what other options do we have? If McCann is right, we can allow that God is author of sin, or give up on the God of the tradition altogether. I turn now to McCann's argument that tracing sin back to God as its cause is not such a bad move after all.

### *God an Unloving Deceiver*

McCann argues, rightly it seems to me, that his view that God causes us with our sin does not make God a sinner. McCann's analogy of the author to the literary creation is telling here. Shakespeare causes Hamlet to stab Polonius, but Shakespeare does not stab Polonius. Hamlet wickedly commits a murder (surely he did not really believe it was "a rat" behind the arras!), for which he is responsible. Shakespeare is responsible for the entire situation in all its details, but he is not wicked and responsible for a murder. God may cause us sinning, without Himself being a sinner.

But can McCann's God escape the charge of being a deceiver and unloving? McCann analyzes sin as the deliberate choice to act against the command of God. God cannot be a sinner because He is not in authority over Himself and does not give Himself commands. Note that McCann, unlike Anselm, does not see human virtue as reflective of the will or nature of God. Anselm sees sin as deliberately choosing against the *will* of God, and God inevitably wills that all creatures should flourish by actualizing their natures, becoming the most perfect and fully realized instances of what they are. In this way each creature pursues its own "truth" thus imitating God's nature as the absolute standard for Perfect Truth.<sup>10</sup> This is what enables us to give content to the attribution of goodness to God. We have some grasp of the goodness of the divine nature through understanding its reflection in the metaphysical and moral goodness of creatures.<sup>11</sup> This move from created goodness to divine goodness is closed for McCann

who apparently sees virtue as consisting in deliberately choosing to follow God's commands, which commands do not follow from the divine will or nature. God commands created agents to do one thing and then wills that they do the opposite.

So on a general level, it is hard to see how McCann will unpack the claim that God is good in some recognizable sense. And it is very hard to see how McCann will defend the ascription to God of the standard divine virtues of being truthful and loving. McCann must certainly grant that God causes deception. Traditionally ignorance is held to be a result of sin, and so on the Anselmian account, God is not the author of deceit. But McCann must hold that insofar as any created believer is deceived, God made them in their mistake. This is uncomfortable in that it rules out the long and distinguished tradition, from Plato to Plantinga, of positing God as the guarantor of knowledge, connecting the knower to the known. Perhaps McCann will argue that being the author of deception does not make God a deceiver, just as being the author of sin, does not make God a sinner. Othello is deceived, but it would be strange to say that Shakespeare, and not Iago, had deceived him.

But what about those divine commands? In explaining the point about how God is not in authority over Himself and so cannot disobey His commands and be a sinner, McCann gives the analogy of the father's command to the son to be home by midnight. Although the industrious philosopher might be able to devise exotic counter examples over which we need not tarry, as a rule a sincere command entailing obligation on the part of the commandee must intend to instill in him two beliefs. It must instill the belief that the commander wants to be obeyed. Suppose the father has insisted that the son spend the night at his cousin's house, a thing the son is loath to do, and then jokingly commands him to be home by midnight. The son is under no obligation to be home by midnight because he knows it is not really what his father wants. Further, the command must intend to instill the belief that it is possible for it to be obeyed. This is because presumably it cannot be the case that you ought to do something which it is not possible for you to do. A serious command demanding obedience would entail that both the commander and the commandee believe that the commandee can obey. If father and son both know that, given the son's location and the laws of physics, he cannot be home by midnight, it would be irrational of the father to seriously issue the command, and the son could not be obligated to obey it. When someone issues a command, then, the tacit entailments are that he wants to be obeyed and he believes it is possible that he can be obeyed. It follows that, on McCann's account, when God commands He deliberately deceives in that He knowingly conveys that He wants to be obeyed and He believes it is possible that He should be obeyed, when in fact, in the cases where He causes sin, He does not really want to be obeyed and He knows it is not possible for the sinner to have obeyed in any case.

The case for McCann's God being unloving is even more straightforward. If you love someone you desire their good. God, on McCann's view, creates sinning agents whom He will eternally damn for their sins. Perhaps, as the Augustinian tradition holds, it is better to exist in eternal damnation than not to exist at all, and so Hell is better than nothing. In an

Anselmian universe in which God leaves creatures free to sin, this point would explain why God does not permit the sinful to simply destroy themselves utterly and blink out of being. But it would be perverse to insist that eternal damnation is the *good* of the creature that love would desire. If McCann does not want to embrace universalism he is committed to God's wanting and causing terrible, permanent harm to at least some of his creatures.

*McCann's Alternative Theodicy*

Can it be argued that, though God is the author of sin, and hence deceitful and unloving, He is nonetheless good? Perhaps His deceiving most of his created agents—those who do not accept that God is the author of sin—and causing permanent harm to some is necessary for a good which outweighs the overall harm and suffering and which cannot be achieved by any better means. McCann writes that God's moral injunctions are probably "what he would have preferred in the abstract, apart from the particular considerations that lead him to will finally that we engage in acts that are sinful."<sup>12</sup> But this is a strange claim if the aim of McCann's theory is to defend the absoluteness of divine sovereignty. How can "particular considerations" interfere with what God otherwise prefers? God is the immediate cause of all that is not Himself. Either He can achieve His goals without having to cause sin or He cannot. A sovereign God would not need to act so repugnantly in order to bring about the good He envisions. But a God who caused sin when it was not necessary for a greater good, would not be good.

McCann argues, to the contrary, that the sin is indeed necessary. The point of our existence as created agents is that we might freely choose commitment to God.

But . . . a responsible choice in God's favor requires that we understand the alternative—which is to be at enmity with him. Guilt, remorse, a sense of defilement, and the hopeless desolation of being cut off from God cannot be understood in the abstract, because if they are only understood abstractly they are not *ours*. Only through experience can we understand what it means to be in rebellion against God, and we gain that experience by sinning.<sup>13</sup>

McCann's explanation here makes some sense in an Anselmian universe. God might *permit* sin, knowing that it might contribute to the good of our understanding what it means for us to cut ourselves off from God. (Though note that insisting that God foresees some good coming from the evil is not at all the same thing as saying that God *prefers* that the evil should occur.) And in Anselm's universe, since God does not cause deception and the choice to reject God really must come only from ourselves, the first-hand experience is not to be had without the sin. But McCann's universe is different. God is the immediate cause of everything about us, including all of our understandings. There is no room for any original contribution from the side of the creature. If we have an understanding of guilt, etc., it is because God causes in us the belief, the feeling, and

whatever else belongs to our understanding of guilt, just as He causes the sin which is the source of the guilt. But then McCann's claim that only through the experience of sin can we have this understanding can be shown to be false for several reasons.

First, God is a rational creator. He understands what He makes. He cannot make in us the understanding of guilt, etc., without having the understanding Himself. He cannot create in us the understanding of guilt *as our own* without having *that* understanding. But God does not Himself sin. Thus the understanding of guilt, etc. does not require the experience of having sinned. In McCann's universe we are not at a sufficient distance from God that we can see things from our own perspective which He does not share. We cannot have beliefs and feelings and experiences which He does not cause and which He does not understand exactly as we understand them. If we allow enough created autonomy to enable us to have a perspective which is not reducible to ideas caused in us by God then we have departed from McCann's position and have no reason to embrace the claim that God causes sin.

So it is possible for someone, God at least, to understand guilt etc. without having sinned. One might suggest that *creatures* need to undergo the experience of sin in order to have the understanding. But why? If God can make the belief in us, the secondary causes involved in our actually having sinned are not necessary. For example, God could, having created in us a choice to sin, to abuse a child, let's say, then create in us a very vivid, but false, experience that we are carrying through with the sinful deed, though in fact we are not. Or perhaps He could create us on the doorstep of heaven with a life-time's worth of false memories of having sinned, done the sinful deed, and ultimately repented. Presumably the understanding of what it is to be cut off from God would follow just as surely, but no children would have to suffer. If the good goal to be achieved by the sin is the understanding, and the understanding is created in us immediately by God, then the sinful deed with all the consequent harm and suffering is unnecessary, and a memory of having sinned might do every bit as well as actually having sinned.<sup>14</sup>

Can McCann argue that this option of deception is not open to God since a good God does not deceive? No. As we have seen, McCann's God deceives when He issues commands which, at least in the case of many towards whom they are directed, He does not really want to have obeyed, and which He knows it is impossible to obey. And in any case, if creating us sinning does not entail that God sins, creating us deceived does not entail that God is a deceiver. Certainly people are in fact very often deceived. For the Anselmian, all that has ontological status in the mistaken belief is made and sustained by God, but the mistake itself can be attributed to our fallenness, and hence deception originates with the created agent. For McCann, we do not ultimately contribute anything of which God is not the immediate cause, and so any instance of deception is caused by God. So McCann cannot argue that God would not create in us false beliefs regarding our sins and sinful deeds. But then a theodicy which holds that God must cause actual sin, and sinful deeds, and the terrible consequences we see in the world, because He needs all of this horror to produce our understanding of guilt etc. does not do the job.



*The Requirements of Moral Agency*

McCann argues, in the final section of his paper, that his view allows the created agent sufficient moral autonomy. He sees two criteria for agency, first, a feeling of spontaneity, "that we *do*, rather than undergo" and second, intentionality. Both of these features are "fully compatible with God's role as First Cause of our acts of will." And they are "all that is needed to make me a morally authentic being."<sup>15</sup> The Anselmian agrees with the first claim, but that means he must disagree with the second. In fact, though McCann claims to subscribe to the libertarian view of freedom, his conclusions here fit well with compatibilism.<sup>16</sup> Take Anselm's example of someone who has only a single, god-given desire. In choosing in accordance with his only desire he fulfills McCann's two criteria. He rightly feels that he is an actor who has *done* something, and not just a passive receiver who has undergone something. And he understands and means to be making his choice. It is intentional. Compatibilists standardly offer this sort of example as exhibiting fully-determined free choice. Anselm insists it is not free in the relevant sense. In this situation the rational agent is like the horse or the dog in that he can do only what he is created by God to do. The created free agent needs genuinely open options—a requirement which McCann does not discuss, but one which is almost always held to be the *sine qua non* of a libertarian analysis of freedom. If we cannot choose other than God creates us choosing, how can we bear any ultimate responsibility for our choices? On Anselm's analysis the reason the created agent needs open options is so that he can make a choice which is genuinely *from himself*. Perhaps McCann can claim for created agents a sort of "secondary" autonomy, but in that God is the ultimate author of their choices this sort of "autonomy" does not capture what libertarians see as requisite for moral responsibility.

*A Dangerous Universe*

McCann is right that this Anselmian position concludes to what many will see as difficult consequences. We must grant that "our deeds and judgments . . . lead the course of providence, so that God must somehow adjust his behavior to ours, or work around us to achieve his ends."<sup>17</sup> But on Anselm's account, this limitation is imposed by God on Himself when He chooses to create free agents who will have some share in His aseity. On McCann's analysis God is even more limited. He needs sin to achieve His goals. And presumably this need is not something He has chosen for Himself. If He could achieve His goals without the sin, but chooses sin as the means, His goodness is called into question.

If it is argued that, on Anselm's account, it could turn out that no one is saved, I find that a logical entailment of the system, but not a serious concern. Given God's omnipotence, through which He can produce as many created agents as He wants and continue to work good for them, it seems so statistically remote as to be uninteresting. But just for the sake of argument allow the worst case scenario in which every human being does freely reject saving grace. Then, if it were really the best, God could step in and turn us into the kind of beings McCann already believes us to

be. God could create (McCann style) good willings in us, so that heaven is properly populated. But in this case He would be the author only of a sort of good, not of sin. The Anselmian is not really happy with this solution, since it trades on the suggestion that God might radically diminish our metaphysical stature as agents and by creating a "secondary" goodness in us, make us incapable of genuine moral responsibility, all of which the Anselmian sees as a harm to us. But McCann himself cannot direct this criticism against the proposal, since in his view our having this diminutive metaphysical stature and only secondary goodness is completely consistent with God's goodness.

McCann concludes his paper with the observation that if we could possess what I label primary agency our decisions would not "become more spontaneous, or our intentions more sincere. . . . The only change would be that our wills would finally be out of God's reach—just as Adam and Eve wished they could be. And then we could never rest fully in God's providence, and so could never be safe."<sup>18</sup> Here we come to what may be a deep-seated and powerful motivation to abandon the Anselmian view. If we are primary agents free to reject God then each of us must daily face the real fear that we might just up and choose to turn our back on Him. At any time we might just choose to cut ourselves off from our one chance at lasting happiness. It seems to me that this is a genuine fear and an important issue for libertarian theists. It deserves more consideration than I can give it here, but let me perhaps start the discussion by making two observations. First, Anselm himself argues that it is possible for the created agent to arrive at a point where he need no longer fear that he will reject God. We are motivated only to choose what we believe will make us happy. If, on our own, we have chosen justice, eventually we can arrive at a stage where we see nothing to desire which falls outside of the will of God. This is the condition of the good angels (and presumably, the saints) now. By their own efforts they have placed themselves beyond the possibility of sinful desire.<sup>19</sup> They no longer have moral options, nonetheless they are free because it is "from themselves" that they have arrived at this point. So it is possible, on the Anselmian account, to reach safe haven eventually.

But for us still walking through the dark valley, the fear cannot be dismissed. Anselm holds that it is possible for us, even having received the grace requisite for salvation, to reject it. God does not ask much of us. He does not expect us to, *per impossibile*, generate some goodness out of ourselves. All we need do is to hang on to what He has given us. But we might fail at even that minimal task. If we have experienced the joy and comfort of faithful belief, we may judge that it would be madness and near impossible for us to abandon it. But, at least for most of us, we may feel that constancy is not an absolute certainty. This side of the grave we are not 100 percent safe.

But is not the same true on McCann's view? You may today be the most virtuous person and feel assured of heaven, and tomorrow God may rewrite your character as one fallen from grace, sinning and eternally damned. Perhaps you can "rest" and feel "safe" in that, whatever happens, it is exactly what God wants to have happen, but this will not be much comfort to you if you are finally and completely cut off from God. Even worse. From the Anselmian perspective God is the absolute source

and standard of all truth and all charity. Hatred and deception are a falling away from God. If it should turn out that He is instead an unloving deceiver, then the world is turned upside down and there is no safety anywhere, ever. It is not clear that a universe of atoms and the void is worse than the "safety" of such a God. The Anselmian position involves two costs: our choices are not perfectly intelligible, and God's omnipotence is limited by His own choosing. This seems a small price to pay for the assurance that God is not, after all, the author of sin.

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### NOTES

1. Hugh McCann, "The Author of Sin?" *Faith and Philosophy* 22 (2005) pp. 144–59, see p. 149.

2. Ibid. p. 145.

3. That is the work of a volume, forthcoming from Oxford University Press, entitled *Anselm on Freedom for Theists*.

4. I argue that Anselm prefigures the work of Harry Frankfurt in arguing that moral agency requires an ability to make second-order volitions. "Anselm on Eudaemonism and the hierarchical structure of moral choice," *Religious Studies* 41 (2005) pp. 249–68.

5. This is why Anselm argues, in *On the Fall of the Devil* 14, that a (hypothetical) angel to whom God gave only the desire to will *rightly*, that is in accord with what God wants, could not really will *justly*. Like a dog or a horse, the angel "received [the desire to will rightly] in such a way that he is unable to will otherwise." But, as Anselm uses the term, "justice" for the created agent entails *choosing* to moderate his desires to conform to the will of God.

6. Robert Kane, "Responsibility, Luck and Chance: Reflections on Free Will and Indeterminism," *Journal of Philosophy* 96 (1999) pp. 217–40.

7. A full defense of this interpretation of Anselm requires lengthy discussion which lies beyond the scope of this paper. But for a striking text on this issue see *On the Fall of the Devil* 18, where Anselm explains that God has given created agents the conflicting desires of (mere) benefit and justice, "so that [created agents] can, in a way, give justice to themselves. Indeed, if they could not remove it from themselves, there would be no way they could give it to themselves."

8. See Anselm's *On the Fall of the Devil* 9 and *On the Harmony of the Foreknowledge, and the Predestination, and the Grace of God with Free Choice* 1.7.

9. *On the Fall of the Devil* 27. Translation is my own.

10. That sin is choice against the will of God is made clear in *On the Freedom of the Will* 8. The point that all creatures have a sort of "rightness" of which God's nature and will are the standard comes through most clearly in the last two chapters of *On Truth*.

11. One proof text for this point is Anselm's response to Gaunilo (section 8). The latter had criticized the *Proslogion* argument by insisting that we cannot have any concept of "that than which no greater can be conceived."

12. McCann (2005) p. 151.

13. Ibid. p. 153.

14. This suggestion fits well with McCann's own occasionalist leanings. See "The Occasionalist Proselytizer: A Modified Catechism" (with Jonathan

Kvanvig) *Philosophical Perspectives* 5 ed. J. E. Tomberlin (Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview Publishing, 1991) pp. 587–615.

15. McCann (2005) pp. 156–57.

16. McCann's approach echoes that of Augustine, who is clearly a compatibilist. See my "Augustine's Compatibilism" *Religious Studies* 40 (2004) pp. 415–35.

17. Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo* is an effort to show how the fall made the Incarnation "necessary"—necessary in the sense that God, being the best, inevitably does the best.

18. McCann (2005) p. 158.

19. *On the Fall of the Devil* chap. 25.